NYPD traffic agent arrested in Queens

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NYPD traffic agent arrested in Queens

QUEENS, N.Y. (PIX11) – An NYPD traffic agent was arrested in Queens Wednesday evening, according to authorities.

Crystal Wilson, 37, was taken into custody around 7 p.m.

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She was charged with assault and harassment in connection to a domestic incident, police said.

Erin Pflaumer is a digital content producer from Long Island who has covered both local and national news since 2018. She joined PIX11 in 2023. See more of her work

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Sean Williams child porn trial wraps up with mothers' emotional testimony

WJHL Tri-Cities

JEFF KEELING November 13, 2024 at 8:42 PM



This story contains details that may be disturbing for some readers.

GREENEVILLE, Tenn. (WJHL) — Often emotional testimony from the mothers of three alleged child pornography production victims capped off the first day of former downtown Johnson Citian Sean Williams' federal trial Wednesday.

Each woman cried when prosecutors showed explicit photos of their children, who were aged 9 months, 4 years and 7 years and were asleep or unconscious and possibly drugged when the photos alleged to show Williams abusing them in his apartment were taken. Each woman — all three are also alleged sexual assault victims of Williams — described meeting Williams at a time when they were regularly using drugs and alcohol.

None of them knew the alleged abuse had occurred or been photographed until after Williams April 2023 arrest and the subsequent discovery of digital files that formed the basis of the state's evidence.

Computer files show 52 Sean Williams alleged rapes

Williams, 53 faces up to 30 years in prison on each count of enticing a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purposes of manufacturing child pornography.

Prosecutors rested their case shortly after the women's testimony and Williams' defense attorney, Mark Brown, rested his without calling a single witness. Brown did make several efforts to cast doubt on the mothers' credibility during cross examination.

A trial U.S. District Judge Ronnie Greer thought would last three to five days is likely to be over in less than two as the jury will receive final instructions

Thursday morning and retire to deliberate after closing arguments.

Williams has also been charged with child rape and child sexual assault in state court for the same three alleged crimes, which occurred when the children were 9 months, four years and seven years old. One allegedly occurred in June 2008 and the other two in May and December of 2020.

Before jurors broke for lunch they had heard a timeline of how photographic and video evidence against Williams was found after his April 29, 2023 arrest in Cullowhee, N.C. Most of the evidence used was in folders, often named and organized, that were on a USB drive found in the center console of the Subaru Baja Williams was discovered asleep in at a public parking area.

Jurors also heard technical explanations about how Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) special agent Paul Durant had then analyzed that evidence and discovered three child victims. Durant also described and showed photos and videos of what appear to be Williams sexually assaulting the three mothers while they were asleep or unconscious.

Based on a matching of Williams' distinctive scar and tattoo on his left hand,

those images of children showed what Durant said was Williams' body — but not his face — in clearly sexual behaviors directly acted upon the children's bodies or faces.

Durant said the FBI didn't know who any of the victims were, but the files and folders offered some clues as some of them had people's first names (including child victims) and explicit descriptions.

Durant said agents used social media accounts, facial recognition technology and interviews to find people they suspected were specific victims. Those women were then interviewed and shown the digital evidence, which they confirmed.

'He was crying and I was stumbling trying to get up'

All three mothers testified that until that time, they didn't know their children had been abused and photographed without their consent. Photos alleged to be from the same times the children were abused show the mothers asleep or passed out, with several photos of both mothers and children showing a hand pulling their eyelids open.

Those were in a folder named "all sleep" that contained subfolders with specific names of individual alleged victims and "asleep" in the title.

The mother of the 9-month-old said she was introduced to Williams in the fall of 2020 when a friend went up to his apartment to charge her phone. She said Williams introduced himself and "advised me his cleaning lady had quit and (he) was seeing if maybe I wanted to come and clean for him"

The woman, who acknowledged she was abusing drugs at the time, said Williams soon told her she was "too pretty" to be cleaning "and asked if I would just hang out with him."

She said Williams' large apartment was the scene of numerous parties at which people would just "show up at random as the night went on." She described those events as having lots of drugs and alcohol, much of it provided by Williams, and said she did spend the night on multiple occasions.

The woman began crying as prosecutor Emily Swecker showed her photos and video of what appeared to be Williams assaulting her while she was asleep or passed out. She answered 'no' when asked whether she consented or remembered the event.

She described having an abnormally hard time moving or waking up on more than one occasion at Williams' apartment but said she chalked the sensation up to alcohol. But the woman denied that was the case the one time she brought her son to Williams' apartment after Williams had asked her about "bringing him over here to play."

"I wouldn't have used around my child," the woman said. She said Williams told her he'd childproof all the low areas and lock the doors. She said eventually she and her son went to sleep but that at one point in the night she heard him crying and began trying to get up — though she said she felt very groggy.

"I was stumbling trying to get up with him and (Williams) said to me, 'no, I got it.'
That's all I remember," she said.

Swecker then showed the photos of the alleged abuse against the woman's son, which the mother positively identified as she began crying again, this time nearly sobbing. She answered "absolutely not" when asked whether she was aware of any inappropriate photos of him prior to authorities alerting her, and gave the same answer when asked if she consented to any such photos.

Brown quickly went after the woman's history of drug use in cross examination.

She admitted to a "substantial drug problem" at the time of the incident, as well as acknowledging she had sex with Williams on at least a few occasions. The woman defined it as non-consensual, saying Williams was aggressive with her about his desires and that she felt pressure "because there were things I owed him" due to him giving her money and drugs at times.

She said she was "terrified" of Williams and didn't choose to call authorities.

Brown then turned to the woman's claim Williams had drugged her. He noted that Williams had a roommate who was often around, to which the woman replied that no one had been there on the December 2020 night of the incident.

Brown said with the roommate "Alvie" and another man named Samuel often around, "you can't sit here today and say 100% Sean Williams drugged you," saying she was also often under the influence "because you were a junkie."

One juror gasped slightly at the volume and content of Brown's effort to damage the woman's credibility, while the witness herself responded tersely: "I don't think that's a kind way to put it, but I had an addiction issue, yes."

She said she has been sober for nearly four years.

'It was just a flood of emotions and thoughts'

The second mother who took the stand was the only one with memory of potential abuse of her child, and the incident that's by far the furthest back in time.

She described being introduced to Williams in spring 2008 as she was trying to beat an addiction. She said she did some odd jobs for him during a period of several weeks, for cash, before eventually becoming "more of a companion," simply spending a lot of time with him during the days, conversing at length.

"It felt more like emotional support," the woman said. She said she spent the night with Williams numerous times over a brief period and had consensual sex "a few times."

She said Williams met her then 7-year-old daughter during the 2008 Blue Plum Festival, a downtown Johnson City weekend event the first weekend in June, on a Saturday. She said she and the girl, who had gotten a temporary face tattoo during the festival, went to sleep in Williams' bed with Williams on the couch.

She said she couldn't recall whether Williams ever came to the bed in the night and that she didn't remember anything until she woke up around 7:30 a.m. At that point, she said she opened her eyes and noticed Williams "in my direct line of vision" with one hand tracing her still-sleeping daughter's lips. She said she also noticed she where she and her daughter were on the bed had changed from when they went to sleep.

The woman said she then saw Williams' hand on his private parts, but couldn't remember whether it was outside or under his pants. She said she was alarmed but Williams moved and she stayed still.

"I just laid there and it was just a flood of emotions and thoughts," the woman said. She said after about 30 minutes she woke her daughter and took her to the bathroom, where she tried not to disturb her while checking for any signs of abuse, which she did not find.

When prosecutor Meghan Gomez asked why she didn't call authorities with her suspicions, the woman said "I had no proof and everybody trusted Sean — he had a lot of backing." She added that her own negative experiences with authorities had probably factored in as well.

"It's something that I've had to push back, because what I saw ... I thought to

myself, 'I really messed up here," the woman said. She said she didn't learn about the photos and the alleged abuse until early this year after the investigation began.

Brown tried to bring her memory into question during a brief cross examination. He got her to admit she had a crack cocaine problem earlier in 2008, and then questioned her memory, which she admitted wasn't always great.

Brown pressed the woman on her uncertainty about where Williams' hand that wasn't on her daughter's face actually was as a way to call the entire memory into question.

"It's a very shameful and embarrassing thing," the woman responded. "Why would I make that up?"

Brown offered one last question, rather loudly asking whether the woman could 100% remember what she saw that morning in 2008.

"No I cannot," she answered.

'Hang out, drink, do drugs, stay up really late'

The third mother, like the others, made no effort to hide her substance use. She described meeting Williams through the downtown bar scene around 2014 and becoming friends with him "pretty quickly."

She said Williams' apartment was a center of partying where people gathered after bars would close.

"Hang out, drink, do drugs, stay up really late," is how she described people's usual activity when she was there. She said she spent the night a few times

because of the amount of substances she used, but also said she never once had consensual sex with Williams.

The woman, who like the first witness said she's been sober for nearly four years and has just entered a master's in teaching program, described being in and out of odd jobs for work around the time she met Williams. She said she helped clean his apartment a few times for cash.

The friendship lasted years, through her daughter's 2015 birth and well beyond. She said her daughter probably first met Williams in 2018 and that the girl spent the night at the apartment at least twice.

She was recovering from ankle surgery in the spring of 2020 when the photographed and videoed assaults allegedly occurred. The woman said she didn't consent to sex with Williams during the alleged incidents in May 2020, nor to being on video, nor to him photographing or abusing her daughter.

The woman specifically identified a sock she was wearing in a photo of her daughter's abuse where she is also visible, and said she was sure the photos were in Williams' apartment, pointing out specifics about rooms, a couch and a beanbag chair.

She said she remembers nothing about the night of the alleged abuse, but admitted she was on painkillers for the surgery and "sure I was drinking alcohol."

Like the other women, she viewed photos and videos of evidence that include what a file folder called "Rape Collage" contained: a Photoshop-produced collage mixing innocuous photos of her and her child with other photos of the alleged abuse.

Also like the other women, this witness got cross-examined. Brown briefly asked

her whether she had definitely not had a consensual relationship with Williams, to which she said she hadn't.

He then showed an apparent text message, which she said she didn't recognize, and asked her whether she had ever had an account on a sexually explicit website that would allow other people to view her. An objection by Gomez was overruled and the jury was excused while Judge Greer asked Brown where he planned to go with the topic.

He said he just wanted to ask the woman whether she'd had consensual "sex" with Williams through that website. Greer allowed it, Brown asked, and the woman said "no," after which Brown ended his cross examination.

Brown made one so-called "Rule 29" effort to get Greer to acquit Williams without a jury deliberation. He said the second element of the crime — that something about the actions could be linked to interstate commerce, was something prosecutors hadn't offered "a single piece of proof on."

That requirement is a broad one, though, and Gomez said the fact that the images and videos were made in Tennessee and recovered in North Carolina met it.

Greer said "the government's evidence is slim as to the interstate commerce nexus," but ruled that it was still sufficient and denied Brown's motion for acquittal.

Williams, who has sparred with four previous attorneys and often been called down in court during a previous trial and hearings, was quiet throughout the day. Greer asked him whether he had decided to take Brown's advice and not testify, Williams answered simply that he had.

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